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Environment and sustainable development: protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

Outcome of the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 57/257, the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

* A/58/150.

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Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/257, invited the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[1] to report to it at its fifty-eighth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

II. Outcome of the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties

A. Summary

2. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held its eighth session at New Delhi, India, from 23 October to 1 November 2002. The Conference adopted the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development on 1 November 2002.[2]

B. Outcome of the eighth session

3. The Delhi Declaration, a broad political statement, incorporates themes adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August 2002. It stresses that risks associated with climate change, with potentially most serious impacts on developing countries, need to be addressed by integrating appropriate action in national sustainable development strategies in such key areas as water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. The Declaration highlights that, along with mitigation measures, urgent action is required to adapt to climate change. It promotes informal exchange of information on actions relating to mitigation and adaptation to assist Parties in continuing to develop effective and appropriate responses to climate change. It reaffirms that all Parties should continue to advance the implementation of their Convention commitments, that developed countries should demonstrate that they are taking the lead in modifying longer-term trends, and that economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries. In recognizing the findings of the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it underscores the need for significant cuts in global emissions to meet the Convention's ultimate objective. Parties that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention strongly urged Parties that have not done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

4. The Declaration recognizes the importance of improving access to reliable, affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound energy services and resources. It emphasizes the promotion of international cooperation in developing and disseminating innovative technologies, particularly in the energy sector, through investment, market-oriented approaches, private-sector

involvement and supportive public policies. It calls for technological advances to be promoted through research and development, economic diversification and strengthening of relevant regional, national and local institutions for sustainable development. It stresses that actions are required to diversify energy supply by developing advanced, cleaner, more efficient, affordable and cost-effective fossil fuel and renewable energy technologies, including hydropower, and their transfer to developing countries on concessional terms, as mutually agreed. It also stresses that actions are required to substantially increase the global share of renewable energy sources with the objective of increasing their contribution to total energy supply.

5. The Conference welcomed progress on the prompt start of the clean development mechanism which had been launched as part of the Marrakesh Accords adopted in 2001. The mechanism is to channel private-sector investment into emission-reduction projects in developing countries (parties not included in annex I to the Convention). In that way, it is to advance sustainable development in those countries, while allowing governments of industrialized countries (parties included in annex I to the Convention) to use resulting emission reduction credits against their Kyoto Protocol targets. The mechanism therefore creates a new and unique opportunity for developing countries to obtain resources for sustainable development. Among the important operational measures that were recommended by the Executive Board of the mechanism and approved by the Conference were simplified modalities and procedures for small-scale projects of the mechanism, which have lower transaction costs and are more attractive for investors. The Conference also agreed with the proposal of the Board to facilitate the designation of operational entities which are assuming various certifying functions in the context of the mechanism. Finally, the Conference approved the proposed rules of procedure for the Board, which are essential for its efficient, cost-effective and transparent functioning.

6. The Conference completed the elaboration of guidelines under articles 5, 7 and 8 of the Kyoto Protocol and of standards for registry systems, which are essential components for the credible implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. The guidelines establish the rules for estimating greenhouse gas emissions and for the accounting of assigned amounts, which constitute the basis for assessing the fulfilment of commitments of industrialized countries under the Protocol. They also set the rules for the reporting of information by industrialized countries and for its review. The standards for communication between registry systems are a key prerequisite for the transparent functioning of emissions trading and the mechanism.

7. National communications are an important means for sharing information among all parties. New guidelines were adopted for the preparation of second national communications of developing countries. Those guidelines, which were an improvement of the earlier guidelines, will enhance the quality of national reporting and facilitate the improved exchange of information that is crucial for the effective implementation of the Convention and of the Protocol when it enters into force. The Consultative Group of Experts on national communications of developing countries was asked to identify and assess technical problems and constraints in the preparation of the first reports, and the secretariat was requested to prepare a report on the steps that have been taken by developing countries to implement the Convention. The Conference took further decisions to improve the reporting of national greenhouse gas inventories of industrialized countries and guidelines for the technical review of these reports.

8. The Conference provided guidance to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the designated financial mechanism of the Convention, on the operation of the two new funds for developing countries, namely the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, that were both established as part of the Marrakesh Accords in 2001. The Least Developed Countries Fund is currently operational and is providing resources to finance the preparation of national adaptation programmes of action in least developed countries, and to support the organization by the Least Developed Countries Expert Group of regional preparatory workshops to advance the process of preparation of the programme of action. Guidance was given to GEF to fund the preparation of second national communications from developing countries and to operationalize the Special Climate Change Fund.

9. The Conference also marked the conclusion of the second review of effectiveness of the financial mechanism, which acknowledged that although there is need to improve upon some operational aspects of GEF work, it had effectively performed its role as an entity operating the financial mechanism. As a result of the review, the Conference also requested the Convention secretariat to prepare a report, in consultation with the GEF secretariat, on the determination of funding necessary and available for the implementation of the Convention, and also to facilitate, through dialogue, the streamlining of Conference guidance to GEF.

10. The Conference reviewed the set of activities adopted as a policy framework to enhance the transfer of technology under the Convention. It recalled the relevant chapter of Agenda 21 on the transfer of environmentally sound technology and the relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, adopted in Johannesburg in September 2002. It welcomed the initial progress in the implementation of the framework for meaningful and effective actions to enhance the implementation of article 4.5 of the Convention, as agreed in the Marrakesh Accords. It also noted with appreciation the progress of the work of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer and encouraged the Group to continue with its good work. The Conference requested the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to conduct consultations and facilitate collaboration among the three expert groups established under the Convention, namely, the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications of Developing Countries, the Expert Group on Technology Transfer and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group.

11. The Conference stressed the need to implement the measures agreed at its seventh session to strengthen the capacities of developing countries to address the challenges posed by climate change. An informal mechanism created between the secretariat and key intergovernmental organizations, including GEF and its implementing agencies, which deliver capacity-building support to the parties, continued at the eighth session. The objective of that process is to improve information exchange between relevant organizations, and thereby to facilitate coordinated and efficient provision of capacity-building support to parties.

12. The Conference also adopted the New Delhi work programme on article 6 of the Convention, relating to education, training, public awareness, public access to information, public participation and international cooperation on those matters. Within that five-year work programme, the Conference agreed on a list of country-driven activities that could be undertaken to improve climate-focused education and

training programmes and increase the availability of information on climate change, thereby improving public awareness and public participation. The work programme also includes a number of elements that will enhance regional and international cooperation on those issues. A novel feature of the work programme is that it recognizes the important role of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in supporting work at the national and international levels. The work programme will undergo an interim review in 2004 and a comprehensive review in 2007.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

13. The General Assembly may wish to, inter alia:

(a) Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;

(b) Note the outcome of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, hosted by the Government of India from 23 October to 1 November 2002;

(c) Invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference.

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[2] See FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.8.